



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

410-841-3185 • 301-858-3185 • 800-492-7122 Ext. 3185 • Fax 410-841-3175 • 301-858-3175 • Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us

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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 187 (HB187) –Criminal Procedure – Expungement – No Finding and Case Terminated Without Finding. This legislation allows a person to expunge their record when a court case ends without a finding of guilt. HB 187 allows individuals to move forward without a court record when they were not found guilty. By enforcing this bill, the initiative will allow Black Marylanders to seek job opportunities, promote fairness in the justice system, and reduce racial disparities.

Black inmates accounted for 72.4 % of state prisoners in the last quarter of the fiscal year in 2023. HB835 will prevent systemic gaps that continuously contribute to unfairness and incarceration of Black individuals within the policing and criminal justice system. Expanding the eligibility of expungement will help individuals to seek jobs and other opportunities without their record identifying them as having previous cases that will profile them. Clearing public records allows fairness and prevents burdens on individuals' lives due to no findings, and gets rid of the inequities in employment and housing.

This critical issue highlights a pathway for reducing systemic disparities within the legal system, as Black individuals are targeted. There should be no public records appearing during their background checks when they are applying for new opportunities or seeking housing. HB187 will prevent individuals from facing lifelong consequences for cases that did not result in a finding of guilt and will promote fairness and opportunity in the justice system.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports HB187.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland